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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

[redacted]
SP - 21/81
30 January 1981
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MEMORANDUM FOR: [redacted]
Multidisciplinary Branch, USSR-EE/OPA

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FROM: [redacted] Chairman, NIE 11-3/8-80

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SUBJECT: Draft IA, "The Soviet Position on Theater Nuclear Forces
in Europe"

1. I'm afraid I continue to have many of the same concerns and disagreements over the issues addressed in your paper that I had some nine months ago when we first met on this subject. Among the concerns I have are the paper's

--Misinterpretations of Soviet doctrine and strategy most notably the assertions made throughout that the Soviets have abandoned preemption in favor of a kind of LOTW policy at the theater level (pages 9, 10 and throughout).

--Assessments of the worth of the SS-4 and SS-5 forces that are not in keeping with community assessments of their survivability, reliability and effectiveness (page 13).

--The implication throughout that Soviet peripheral attack systems were deployed in reaction to threats from NATO and solely for their deterrent value. This is inconsistent with, for instance, the judgments made in NIE 11-3/8-80 (see pages 5, 8, 15 of the draft).

--Mistaken projections. Inasmuch as the paper argues that "In light of the 300 semi-hardened targets on the Soviet periphery, the SS-20 force programmed (some 260 launchers) appears less excessive than it might at first glance."--you should be sensitive to the uncertainties in the numbers (the NIE asserts 351 SS-20s in the future, the number could just as easily be 450).

--Interpretations of the interaction between Soviet and US force procurement and doctrinal evolution that are in my estimate wrong, but which on any account appear as assertions with no evidential support.

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--Judgments on the military effectiveness of systems that are questionable or incorrect. On pages 21-22 it is suggested that conventionally armed GLCMs or P-IIs could "radically degrade" Soviet frontal operations. How? [REDACTED]

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2. I also find objectionable the overly apologetic tone of the paper which seems to be based on the notion that what the Soviets say or write is gospel; that is, that Soviet perception or beliefs are synonymous with Soviet writings or statements. In this vein there are

--Misunderstandings of the Soviet publication process and, hence, the worth of Soviet press commentary. For instance, it is judged that the cessation of Soviet media charges that the US was attempting to circumvent SALT limits may be due to the possibility that these charges "did not find high-level backing" (page 24). In the Soviet publication process "high level backing" precedes publication.

--Perplexing observations like: "No authoritative Soviet spokesman has belittled the SALT II agreement as a negotiating achievement for the Soviet side." The freedom to criticize is not an attribute of the Soviet system. [REDACTED]

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3. I am, of course, available at any time to assist you in improving this paper. Feel free to call on me. [REDACTED]

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